Measures to control rail accidents

80. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in order to control rail accidents, it is proposed to construct subways at crossings, build road over-bridges and convert unmanned level crossings into manned ones;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of construction of such subways, road over-bridges and manned level crosssings on the EcoR system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to control rail accidents at unmanned level crossings (UMLC) it has been proposed to construct limited use subways wherever height of embankment makes it feasible. Till now 444 sites have been identified out of which 312 have already been sanctioned.

Further, the conversion of UMLCs to manned ones is based on the traffic volume and visibility conditions. There are 632 unmanned level crossings meeting the criteria of manning, out of which 477 have been targeted for manning in 2007-08. Additionally, in order to ensure safe, smooth and secure flow of both rail and road traffic, railways construct road over/under bridges (ROB/RUB) on cost sharing basis with the State Governments if the traffic density in terms of Train Vehicle Units (TVU-A unit obtained by multiplying the number of trains with the number of road vehicles passing over the level crossing in 24 hours) exceeds the prescribed norm of 1 lakh, or otherwise on deposit terms. ROB/RUB are also encouraged on Build Own and Transfer (BOT) concept. At present, there are 582 works of ROB/RUB sanctioned on cost sharing basis, 141 on Deposit terms and 54 on BOT concept. In addition 225 works are being constructed by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI).

(c) On East Coast Railway there are no unmanned level crossings meeting the criteria of manning at Railway cost. However, 16 works of ROB/RUB have been sanctioned on cost sharing basis, 5 of which are targeted for completion during 2007-08. 96 limited height subways have been identified on this Railway. 2 works of ROB are being executed by NHAI on this Railway.

Bimalagarh-Talcher Rail Link Project

81. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is status of Bimalagarh-Talcher rail link project which has been badly delayed;

(b) whether this route would reduce distance between Rourkela and Bhubaneswar by almost 180 kms;

(c) whether there have been several agitations in Orissa State over the delay in completion of this project; and

(d) if so, what is the time-frame within it would be completed and operationalized, though belated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) Talcher-Bimlagarh (154 kms) new line project was included in the Supplementary Budget 2003-04. Final Location Survey has been completed and land acquisition has been taken up. An outlay of Rs. 15 crore has been provided during 2007-08.

(b) No, Sir. The distance between Rourkela and Bhubaneswar will get reduced by about 100 kms.

(c) As per the information available, no such agitations have come to the notice of the Railways.

(d) No target date has been fixed. The work will be progressed and completed as per availability of resources.

Fire in "Palace on Wheels"

82. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fire broke out in the engine of the 'Palace on Wheels' train at Delhi on the 3rd October, 2007;

(b) if so, whether the cause of fire has been inquired into, if so, the findings of the inquiry and the action taken thereon; and

(c) the loss of men and material suffered by the Railways as a result of this fire?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) In the incident under reference, steam and flames from the fire box of the steam engine of the 'Palace on Wheels' train entered the Driver's cab due to suspected malfunction of boiler component. The incident is being inquired into by the Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle.

(c) In this incident two railway employees lost their lives and three suffered injuries. The Loco has suffered minor damage in this mishap.

Vacancies in Railways

83. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of vacancies in Railways including technical level, zone-wise;

(b) the action taken to fill up the vacancies; and

(c) whether any survey has been conducted to find out the relationship between accidents and vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The approximate vacancies on zonal railways for Group 'C' & 'D' as on 30.09.2007 are:

Central	12890	Eastern	13415
East Central	15401	East Coast	8438
Northern	17531	North Central	9310
North Eastern	3766	Northeast Frontier	11066